

Specification

The disclosure is objected to because of the following: in the brief description of the drawings, page 7, there are two descriptions of Fig. 11 and no description of Fig. 13.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

Claims 4 and 10-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In claim 4, the term “preferably” renders the claim indefinite.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1,2,5,6,9,14,15 and 17-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Fetsch et al.

Fetsch et al discloses that his separable connector is used with a Venetian blind which, by definition, have the blind structure recited. The coupling member has one portion that is a "generally part spherical head" and another part that is a "generally part spherical socket" since both have curved, rounded engaging surfaces. The claims that recite that one of the components is connected to the window cover is easily met by virtue of the coupling member being connected by the cord to the overall window cover.

Certain claims recite the coupling member being arranged at an upper or lower portion of the blind. However, the location of the coupling member being at “an upper” or “lower” portion of the blind is met by virtue of the coupling member being located at such general locations when the blind is lowered and raised, respectively. Regarding the load take up member, since the Fetsch et al coupling is designed to separate under a certain load, it will “take up” any load below that threshold. The coupling member of Fetsch et al is elastic due to its composition and manner of coupling and separating with the annular portion of either half being considered a “loop”. The elastic and resilient nature of the device renders it broadly as a “spring”. ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 16 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fetsch et al.

The specific load at which the coupling member separates is clearly an obvious design criteria incorporated into the coupling at the time of its manufacture to be tailored to its specific end use.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 4 and 10-13 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, set forth in this Office action and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 7 and 8 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Blair M. Johnson whose telephone number is (571) 272-6830. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon.-Fri., 6:30-3:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Katherine Mitchell can be reached on (571) 272-7069. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Blair M. Johnson/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3634

BMJ
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